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ABSTRACT

This paper describes Project SPECIAL TOPIC, which developed a preservice graduate training program at Central Michigan University for preparing related services personnel in the area of school counseling with special emphasis on special education needs. Two complete training cycles have been completed with a total of 22 full-time graduate students completing the special training. The project utilized existing competencies used by the university for preparing school counselors and added 14 competencies in special education including knowledge of the following: (1) current federal and state legislation, program guidelines, and policies; (2) the rights of individuals with disabilities and their families; (3) state program guidelines for classification and eligibility determination; (4) formal and informal assessment and observational procedures; (5) individual growth and development processes; (6) physical, mental, and emotional disabilities; (7) input, structure, and purposes of Individualized Education Programs; (8) ability, learning rates, modes of learning, and impediments to learning of people with disabilities; (9) ethnic, cultural, and language factors related to people with disabilities; (10) environmental and architectural barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from full participation; (11) learning disorders, social and emotional behavioral problems of persons with disabilities; (12) psychological and sociological impact of disability; (13) impact of disability on the career decision-making process; and (14) roles and skills of other personnel within and outside rehabilitation and educational institutions. The curriculum's course list is attached. (DB)

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PRESENTATION

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
April 8, 1993

Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859

Project SPECIAL TOPIC
(Training of Professionals in Counseling)

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Project SPECIAL TOPIC was developed as a preservice training grant for preparing related services personnel in the area of school counseling. The primary goal of the project was to develop and implement a new training emphasis in special education needs for graduate students working toward earning a professional endorsement in school counseling. As a result of this project, a permanent establishment of a concentration in special education needs within the School Counselor Option of the M.A. Degree Program in Counseling has been initiated at Central Michigan University.

Federal legislative initiatives and the effects of litigation concerning the educational rights of persons with disabilities have resulted in important changes in the delivery of special education services. Those school counseling personnel working in local education agencies in Michigan, as well as across the country, have experienced new and increased demands to provide specialized professional services in working with students with disabilities, parents, teachers and school administrators regarding special education needs and issues. Project SPECIAL TOPIC, comprised of two complete training cycles, over a three-year period has been designed to provide professional preparation in special education needs for a total of 22 full-time graduate students in school counseling. During three semesters and one summer session, students completed a 48-semester credit hour program of graduate course work in Counselor Education and Special Education, including practicum and internship experiences in both urban and rural school settings. Project SPECIAL TOPIC was

designed first to address the immediate shortage of school counselors with professional preparation in special education needs and second to provide a school counselor training model capable of addressing significant developments and ongoing needs in the field of special education.

Selected Special Education Training Competencies

Consistent with the core accreditation criteria of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 1988), Central Michigan University's graduate training and professional endorsement program in School Counseling is predicated upon a framework comprised of (1) environmental studies and (2) specialized studies. Environmental studies include the history, philosophy, trends, purpose and objectives, ethics, legal aspects, standards and roles of counselors within schools. Specialized studies are comprised of six distinct areas of functioning with respect to the role of the school counselor. These areas include organization and administrative functions, counseling-coordination- consultation functions, appraisal functions, placement-follow-up- referral functions, program planning-management-evaluation functions and finally, professional ethics, growth and development functions. Moreover, with respect to the area of specialized studies, CACREP (1988) delineates specific competencies within each of the above six areas which are to be acquired and demonstrated by school

counselor trainees by the culmination of their program of professional preparation.

Beyond following CACREP's specific competencies for preparing school counselors, Project SPECIAL Topic, infusd selected special education competencies into five designated counselor education courses. The strategies for infusing the special education competencies were designed by the project director, project coordinator, Special Education and Counselor Education faculty during the Summer of 1990. A broad spectrum of special education competencies identified and infused into the designated counseling courses. The basic framework from which the competencies were delineated is represented by a set of competencies that were developed and proposed by Hosie, Patterson and Hollingsworth (1989, p. 174) and are stated below:

1. **Knowledge of current federal and state legislation, program guidelines, and policies** relating to the broad spectrum of federal, state and local services for people with disabilities.

2. **Knowledge of the rights of individuals with disabilities and their families,** and the skills necessary to advise them of their rights and advocate on their behalf or to refer them to appropriate advocacy agencies or groups.

3. **Knowledge of state program guidelines for classification and eligibility determination,** current diagnostic tools and their limitations, and the skills necessary to relate these to learning and training characteristics and their remediation or correction.

4. **Knowledge of formal and informal assessment and observational procedures,** and the skills necessary to relate these to the special learning strategies of individuals with various types of disabilities.

5. **Knowledge of individual growth and development processes,** and the interaction of these processes with various types of disabling conditions, as well as the skills necessary to relate this knowledge to developmental learning objectives when applicable.

6. **Knowledge of physical, mental, and emotional disabilities,** including sensory impairments, speech disorders, communication deficits, and their effect on diagnostic and remediation methodologies, as well as aids and assistive devices and the skills necessary to overcome or lessen their effect in learning, training, counseling and employment settings.

7. **Knowledge of input, structure, and purposes of Individualized Education Programs**, Individualized Transition Programs, and Individualized Written Rehabilitation Programs, and the skills necessary to consult on their development or assist in their construction, implementation, and evaluation.

8. **Knowledge of ability, learning rates, modes of learning, and impediments to learning of people with disabilities,** and the skills necessary to identify unsuccessful achievement and to change methods and learning objectives when necessary .

9. **Knowledge of ethnic, cultural and language factors related to people with disabilities,** as well as attitudinal biases

held by teachers, employers and others, and the skills necessary to modify these attitudes.

10. **Knowledge of environmental and architectural barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from full participation in society,** and the skills to consult with appropriate individuals to alleviate these barriers.

11. **Knowledge of learning disorders, social and emotional behavioral problems of persons with disabilities,** and the skills necessary to instruct or consult with teachers and potential employers, using behavioral modification and management principles to enhance learning and social behavior.

12. **Knowledge of the psychological and sociological impact of disability** on individuals with congenital, as well as adventitious, disabilities and the impact on the family, and the skills necessary to consult, counsel, and/or provide information to individuals with disabilities and their families or significant others to alleviate myths and stereotypes and facilitate their understanding.

13. **Knowledge of the impact of disability on the career decision-making process** and the skills to assist individuals with disabilities in career decision-making and development.

14. **Knowledge of the roles and skills of other personnel within and outside rehabilitation and educational institutions,** and the skills to appropriately refer individuals with disabilities and their families.

The objectives, design and management plan of Project SPECIAL TOPIC are intended to provide school counselor trainees with opportunities to attain professional knowledge and competencies deemed necessary for the provision of quality educational services for students with disabilities. The blending of different pedagogical and clinical training methods is particularly relevant to elevating the level of preservice preparation of school counselors who will provide professional services to students with disabilities. Moreover, the internal coherence between the philosophy, goals, objectives and activities of this project is consistent with the best practice models, as referenced in the current programmatic and treatment literature, for addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities.

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Project SPECIAL TOPIC

CYCLE I
(48 total credit hours)

Spring 1991

CED 504	Introduction to School Guidance **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
CED 517	Development of Human Potential	2 credits
CED 650	Theories and Techniques of Group Counseling	3 credits
CED 677	Psychological Foundations of Counseling **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
SPE 645	Special Education Workshop	2 credits
		13 credits total

Summer I 1991

CED 518	Approaches to Encounter	2 credits
CED 651	Counseling with Children	3 credits
		5 credits total

Summer II 1991

CED 640	Standardized Tests **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
CED 695	Research for Counseling and Special Education **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
		6 credits total

Fall 1991

CED 610	Career Development and Counseling **(SPECIAL TOPIC)** (535/580C)	3 credits
CED 630	Counseling Ethics and Professional Issues	3 credits
CED 660	Counseling Techniques	3 credits
SPE 750	Teacher Consultancy Skills for Special Education Programs and Services	3 credits
		12 credits total

Spring 1992

CED 670M	Plan B Seminar	3 credits
CED 690	Supervised Experience in Counseling	3 credits
CED 691	Internship in Helping Professions	3 credits
CED 791	Advanced Internship in Helping Professions	3 credits
		12 credits total

Comprehensive Examination
Plan B Paper

Project SPECIAL TOPIC

CYCLE II
(48 total credit hours)

Spring 1992

CED 504	Introduction to School Guidance **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
CED 517	Development of Human Potential	2 credits
CED 650	Theories and Techniques of Group Counseling	3 credits
CED 677	Psychological Foundations of Counseling **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
SPE 645	Special Education Workshop	2 credits
		13 credits total

Summer I 1992

CED 518	Approaches to Encounter	2 credits
CED 651	Counseling with Children	3 credits
		5 credits total

Summer II 1992

CED 640	Standardized Tests **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
CED 695	Research for Counseling and Special Education **(SPECIAL TOPIC)**	3 credits
		6 credits total

Fall 1992

CED 610	Career Development and Counseling **(SPECIAL TOPIC)** (535/580C)	3 credits
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